

Samuel J. Lewis Walker.

SERMONS

PREACHED IN

The First Church of Christ in Hartford,

BY

REV. LEONARD BACON, D. D., LL. D.,

AND

REV. GEORGE LEON WALKER, D. D.,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LATTER IN THE
MINISTRY OVER THAT CHURCH.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY MEETING-
HOUSES OF THE FIRST CHURCH.

THE CHURCH IN ITS LOCALITY.

A SERMON

AT THE INDUCTION OF THE

REV. GEORGE LEON WALKER, D.D.,

INTO THE PASTORAL OFFICE

IN THE

FIRST CHURCH IN HARTFORD,

FEBRUARY 27, 1879.

BY

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HARTFORD, CONN.:

THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD CO. PRINT.

1879.



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S E R M O N .

REV. ii. 13. I know thy works and where thou dwellest.

IT is among the most obvious inferences from these epistles addressed to "the seven churches," that Christ, in whose name the epistles are written, has an interest in the welfare and prosperity of every local or particular church. At that early period a church had been instituted in each of the principal cities of proconsular Asia, and to each of those churches, as to a distinct community responsible for itself, a distinct communication is sent, proceeding as from the lips of the glorified Saviour, and conveying to that church his special messages of censure and of commendation, of warning and of encouragement.

To the church at Pergamos, the Saviour says, among other things, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." In this it is implied that the church addressed—and therefore every church—has local relations and responsibilities, and that the character of the place in which it dwells must be considered in the estimate of its works—that is, of what it has done as compared with what it ought to do.

Taking, then, the suggestion which the text gives us, I propose to speak of *the church as a local institution*. It is in local institutions of one kind and

another that civilization, and especially the civilization of a free people, organizes itself. For example, our civilization—the civilization which surrounds us here—is organized in that way. Not only is the city itself, with all its municipal rights and functions, a local institution, but you have other institutions contributing in various ways to the wealth or welfare of the community—commercial institutions, such as banks and other trading corporations—institutions of learning and education, such as the schools, the college, and the learned societies—institutions of charity, such as hospitals and asylums. These are among the institutions of the place that have their part as permanent organizations—and each its own part—in making the place what it is. In these epistles, introductory to the Apocalypse, the gospel is regarded as having established itself at Pergamos, and at each of the cities named, in the form of a local institution—the church. Just so Christianity, wherever it obtains a foothold, organizes itself, and cannot but organize itself, in the form of local or parochial churches. Thus this church has its position among the local institutions of your city. Nay, it was in fact the earliest institution here—older than the town itself—older than the name of Hartford. Even the soil on which we stand to-day—the soil on which the more than forty thousand people of this city have their homes—was acquired from the wild natives for the very purpose of planting here this church of Christ as the center around which all other local institutions were to rise in due succession—the nucleus of that Christian civilization before which the wilderness was to pass away.

Let us recollect, then, what the institution is which

we are to consider. What do we mean by "the church" when we speak of it as a local institution? I answer:

1. It is a worshipping congregation or society of *Christians and Christian families*. It is an association of families, and not a mere aggregation of individuals. Christianity, considered as an organized power, having its work and influence in human society, begins with the Christian constitution of the family. It goes into the household to consecrate all the relations of domestic duty and affection, to illuminate with the light of devotion and of immortal hope, not only the vicissitudes of gladness and of grief, but all the quiet current of domestic life and love, and to appropriate for its own divine uses all the gentle influences and all the graceful and blessed sanctities that fill the sphere of home. Thus, the local church, instead of being made up of individuals isolated from each other like the shareholders in a trading corporation, is made up, like the State, of individuals grouped in natural relations, bound together by all natural ties, and acting upon each other by all the diversified influences of natural affection. This constitution of the church—if it be indeed a Christian church, alive with Christian truth and love—is the first condition of its work and influence as a local institution. Look at a church in its actual coming together. Stand at the doors of that assembly when the bright morning of the Christian Sabbath summons from their homes the scattered worshipers. How do they come? Not one by one, in silent loneliness, but in cheerful, loving groups and companies. Here are father and mother, arm in arm, leading their little children to the house of prayer; here are brothers and sisters, here the affectionate

greetings of kindred and friends, here a newly wedded pair, here aged worshipers whose feeble steps keep pace with the steps of children's children, old age and infancy walking together to the holy place. See, then, how much of human society in its mutual affections and mutual duties—how much of human life in its tenderest and most sacred sympathies—is incorporated with the life and local influence of the local church.

2. Recollect now *why* these worshipers and worshipping households are thus associated. It is for *communion in the worship of God, and for the enjoyment of all Christian privileges and influences*. It is for their own religious edification and progress, so that each family and each individual soul may have the benefit of constant religious teaching and exhortation, and may be aided in all the duties and conflicts of a religious life; it is for mutual defense against worldly influences, so that they may all help each other to withstand the pressure of those currents of ungodly example and fashion that carry along as with resistless force the children of disobedience; and finally it is for aggressive action and influence, so that the light of Christian truth set forth in all the forms of Christian teaching, and commended not only to the conscience by the dignity of Christian example, but also to the affections by the persuasive power of neighborly kindness, may enter with its new-creating efficacy the homes of all, whether rich or poor, whether elevated and refined by knowledge or depressed by ignorance and neglect.

3. Remember also, that, in the local institution which we are considering, *all the members*, in proportion to their gifts and the measure of their influence, *are to coöperate for that common cause which is the bond*

of their union. In whatever church there is a free development of the Christian spirit, there, whatever the special form of organization, and whatever the titles of officers or the distribution of duties among them, something of zeal and activity in the common cause must needs pervade the body. That member of the church, who, instead of caring for the cause, cares only for his own accommodation and that of his family, is a dead branch of the vine, or at best one that bears leaves only, and not clusters. There is no living Christ in that man whose religious zeal exhausts itself in providing for him and his family a convenient pew in some orthodox and respectable place of worship, and who counts it no concern of his that there are multitudes around him living in a neglectful ignorance of God's word, profaning the Sabbath, despising the Saviour, and dying in their sins. A church made up of such members may deem itself rich, but it is poor—may have a name to live, but it is dead.

4. Nor may it be overlooked that the local church is designed to be *a permanent institution*. Liable as it may be to decay, and even to removal and extinction, it is not to be regarded as if it were in its nature a temporary association—like a partnership in business, or like any ordinary association of individuals for pleasure or for mutual improvement—an association that takes no hold on society at large, and that depends for its continued existence on the convenience, the caprice, or the unsteady zeal of those who, having formed it for their own ends, relinquish it when those ends are either gained or defeated. The local church is not like a tent pitched to-day for a temporary use, and removed to-morrow; it ought rather to be like some grand temple, built not for the present only, but for distant ages,

and standing on its deep foundations while everything around it suffers change. The local church, existing for ends that are both permanent and sacred, taking up and consecrating to those ends so much of human thought and sympathy, incorporating with its own life so much of the life of society, and intertwining its influences with all the influences that tend to advance or guard the welfare of civilized communities, has its position, if it is rightfully constituted and conducted, among the most permanent institutions of the place in which it is established. A true seedling of the tree of life, it strikes its roots deep into the soil prepared for it; it draws its steady growth from all the elements; it gets strength out of the storms with which it battles; year after year it spreads out its branches in a broadening canopy; from age to age the weary and fainting sit under its shadow with delight; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations.

“I know thy works,” said Christ to the church at Pergamos, “and where thou dwellest.” Let us think, then, what the local church ought to do—what its works should be in the place where it dwells.

I. The whole work of the church, in the place of its abode, is *not wrought by any merely incidental influence, or by unconsidered and desultory efforts*. To each church, in its own parochial sphere, there is committed a great trust under God’s arrangement—a work to be wrought on that spot for the welfare of the population that, in successive generations, is there to live, there to act, there to pass through the experiences of human joy and grief, there to die, and thence to pass into eternity. Amid that population it is to hold forth, age after age, with steady radiance, the light of life. It is to stand like a bulwark against ignorance, super-

stition, error, and all ungodliness. It is to be continually gathered into its inclosure, and binding together in its holy covenant, not only its own children, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but strangers also, and the children of those who never trained their households to Christian obedience or Christian faith. It is to be a center of every salutary influence in the community—a perennial fountain of healing and refreshing waters spreading on every side,—here in a broad and open current, there in unnoticed channels. Doubtless that which we may call the incidental influence of a church, the undesigned and in a sense unconscious influence, inseparable from the keeping up of public worship and public religious instruction, is of much more importance in the impression made on the community at large than many of us are ready to conceive. But the work which a church ought to do in its own domain can never be wrought by merely undesigned and incidental influences. There must be earnest thought, devout inquiry, plans, enterprises, arrangements, the provision of all needed instruments and conveniences for the work. The question how the church may best fulfill its mission must be considered not only by church officers in their several departments of duty, but by all the members, for it concerns them all. How shall we, as a body of Christian worshipers, best promote our own inward life and spiritual growth? How shall we deal with the youth and children of the congregation to secure their attention and enlighten their minds, and commend the truth to their consciences and affections? How shall we most effectually invite the stranger to come and worship with us?—how overcome the prejudices of the bigoted sectarian or the ignorant unbeliever? And

as for the poor, who, while they need so much—for this life as well as for the life to come—the elevating influences of the Sabbath and of the church, are so tempted to withdraw themselves and their children from all the light and comfort of religion, and thus to form, in any compact population, a “lower class” ever sinking toward an utterly wretched and utterly neglected degradation—how shall we operate to carry into all their dwellings the illumination, the hopes and motives, and the gracious invitations of Christ’s gospel?—how shall we teach their reluctant feet the way to the house of God?—how convert their unhallowed, noisy, wretched Sundays into calm and blessed Sabbaths, refreshing the wearied body with cleanliness and rest, and cheering the fretted mind not only with lessons of contentment and hope, but with the loftiest inspirations of duty and of love? No church can adequately perform its proper work as a local institution divinely chartered for upholding and advancing the Redeemer’s cause, unless it is conversant with such inquiries as these.

II. Let us think, then, of the church *at work, and working on* from age to age. Let us think how a church, aware of its dignity and importance as a local institution, and intent on its proper work, will provide for itself, according to its ability, all the conveniences and helps which such a work, continued through successive generations, may be found to require. In the weakness and poverty of its beginning, it may be content to worship in some hired apartment, inconvenient, uncomfortable, and perhaps continually desecrated by uses that waken, in those who enter it for worship, the most undesirable associations of thought. It may be constrained to occupy a moving tent, or to make a

barn its refuge from wintry storms. It may be driven by persecution to hide itself in lonely retreats among the mountains, or in old quarries and excavations. Or, having been led into the wilderness, it may hold its assembly under some spreading tree, where the woods and waters, as the wind moves over them, mingle their murmurs with the voice of prayer and praise. But as the institution outlives the weakness of its beginning, or the perils of its age of persecution, it acquires a settled habitation of its own. A society of Christian men, if it can live where ordinary industry receives its ordinary rewards, will become, after a while, sufficiently increased in this world's goods to build for itself its own house of worship. At first, that house may be a lowly, and, to the scornful or critical eye, an unsightly structure; but in a few years it is displaced by another, more comely, and better suited to the wants of a more numerous assembly. That also, in its turn, grows old and must pass away. But even the ground on which the fathers worshiped seems hallowed, and on that spot, perhaps, the children's children build a statelier and more enduring temple. So of other conveniences. In process of time, if the church prospers and is strengthened, and if its usefulness becomes larger and more diversified, it naturally provides apartments of its own for the midweek evening lecture—for the Sunday-school—for the conference in which awakened and inquiring minds meet with their pastor to receive familiar instruction and personal guidance—for friendly and social meetings, devotional or charitable, as when the women of the church, "full of good works and alms-deeds," provide garments for the poor, or combine in other modes the contributions of their industry for the

service of Christ. The contrast, in this respect, between the church-edifices which were built two generations ago, and those which, in any of our larger towns, have been built within the last thirty years, is significant of progress. And as the work of a city church extends—as its sons and daughters go out into suburbs or into lanes haunted by ignorance and poverty, to gather neglected children into Sunday-schools, and to rescue them from degradation, the church, recognizing its own importance as a local institution, will see that no such effort is permitted to fail for want of any material accommodation. Nor are these things all. Libraries—the Sunday-school library for the children, the parish library for all the congregation, and (why not also?) a pastor's library of theological and Biblical learning, accumulating from age to age, and stimulating and aiding the studies of successive pastors through successive centuries—become needful to the highest usefulness of the church as a local institution, designed not only for permanence, but for progress; and these also, when found to be needful, are provided.

I may say, then, by way of summing up these thoughts, that the church, duly conscious of its responsibilities as a local institution, will gather around itself, or will institute within itself, all the arrangements necessary to its own permanency, its progress, and its healthful and efficient activity. Such a church will remember that the condition of society, under whatever form of civilization, is always changing—that its own relations to the surrounding population and to all the influences that act upon society are never in one age just what they were in the age preceding—that if it becomes stiffly and blindly conservative of

all things as they were, refusing to adapt its arrangements and methods to the existing needs and habits of the people—it cannot but lose its power, forfeit its true dignity, and prove itself unfaithful to its Head who sits upon His throne creating all things new. Its methods of religious nurture for children and of catechetical instruction for the young—its methods of attracting the people from without into the house of God, and of bringing them into habitual attendance there, will always be open to reconsideration, and will change with the changing exigencies of the place where it dwells. Above all, it will remember that God's Holy Spirit is not wont to work in those methods only which old tradition would prescribe; and that therefore, while it prays "O Lord revive thy work," it must be ready to work for God and with him, whatever the method in which that prayer may be answered. The strength, the life of every church—its influence for God in the place of its abode—must ever depend on the presence of the Holy Spirit, convincing the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; and the church that fails through prejudice and pride, or by mere sluggishness, to welcome, with joy and with renewed activity, the indications of God's reviving presence, has cause to repent, trembling lest its candlestick be removed.

We are here for the purpose of introducing a brother, already widely known and honored, into the office of pastor and teacher in a church with a history that antedates the history of the town and of the State. The church itself is perhaps the best illustration of the subject which has employed our thoughts. It has almost completed its fifth half-century, and the blessed light has been radiant from its golden candlestick

through all those ages. This First Church of Christ in Hartford was gathered before there was any Hartford in New England; and its earliest officers were elected and ordained, not here, but a hundred miles away, where the academic city of Cambridge now is. Its removal from the colony on the Bay, to begin a new colony on the River, in the far west of 1636, was what made Hartford. I think of that removal in the leafy month of June—the caravan of a hundred travelers, men, women, and children, some on horseback, many on foot, and one delicate lady carried on a litter, making their way slowly through the tangled wilderness, their great herd of cattle feeding on the wild herbage, and the kine yielding milk for the children. Members of the church had already come hither to prepare a place; but in that migration the church itself came, led by its pastor and its colleague teacher, keeping Sabbath in the woods, and crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” As we think of that Sabbath, or of their morning and evening worship on the way, we seem to hear “the sounding aisles of the dim wood ring” with the rude music of their psalm. Faith sees the angel of the Lord encamping round about them. Faith discerns the invisible presence of God going with them—the pillar of cloud by day along their march—the pillar of fire by night guarding their repose. They are bringing the ark of God’s covenant, and when at last their feet are planted on this side of the river, and the place where we stand to-day has become the place of their worship, Christ is here, and the place of his rest is glorious. The men, the women, the children, who came in that pilgrim caravan, were buried here behind their humble sanctuary—they, and their children after

them; and to-day this temple, built with its massive walls for generations yet unborn, protects their graves and is their monument. Nay—not this temple only, but the city itself, with all that is most to be honored in its history, and all that is brightest in the prospect of its future, is a memorial of the men who planted here this church of Christ to be the center of a new and more Christian civilization.

It is Christ's message to every church, and therefore to this church, "I know thy works and where thou dwellest." The record of all that this church has done in ages past is with Christ. He never forgets. The possibilities of work yet to be done—of influence yet to flow out from this church upon the myriads of souls around it—are ever in his view. Brethren, who have come into this ancient inheritance, and upon whom these grand responsibilities are resting, be faithful to Him. If there is inspiration from Him in the memory of what this church has been and has done, surely there is a higher inspiration in the thought of present gifts and opportunities, and of what results may come from your fidelity to Christ, not only now but when you shall have been gathered to your fathers. Let not this First Church of Christ in Hartford become, through your negligence, forgetful of its true dignity and duty as a local institution. The gift which you receive to-day from Him who walks among his golden candlesticks and holds the stars in his right hand—the gift which adds another honored name to the long line of your pastors—is not the gift of a Sunday luxury for yourselves and your families, but rather a gift that brings upon you an added weight of responsibility for the moral and

religious welfare of Hartford, now and in the years to come.

To you, my brother—let me rather say, my own son, for as a son with a father you have labored with me in the gospel—to you I offer here no words of mere congratulation. There cannot but be more of awe than of exultation or gladness in the feeling with which you accept the office of pastor here. You know, from your experience elsewhere, how great the work is. You are to stand in an illustrious succession. Of your living predecessors I may not speak. But I may refer you to the long and faithful ministry of JOEL HAWES, so successful in the repeated revival of religion. I may repeat the name of NATHAN STRONG, of whose ministry here, though he died an old man more than sixty years ago, some of us in this assembly to-day have personal remembrance, and who was, in his day, a leader of thought and of enterprise, not only in this church, but among the pastors and churches of this commonwealth. I might mention one and another of your more distant predecessors,—such as WADSWORTH and WOODBRIDGE—honored in their day, and worthy to be honored now and in days to come. But in all the catalogue there is no name to be compared with that of THOMAS HOOKER, “the light of the western churches,”—the most eloquent preacher, the wisest counsellor, the most discerning and far-sighted statesman, the most beloved saint, of all our New England fathers. Out of his devout study of the Bible—out of his sermons preached to the men whose graves are just behind you—came that simple but unprecedented product of political wisdom—so marvellous for the time in which it was produced—the first constitution of Connecticut. He died before

age could crown him with its honors, but his influence is living still. More than any other man, he was the father of Hartford. More than any other one man he was the father of Connecticut. To stand in his place is not an honor merely—it is a dread responsibility; and I know you feel it. This ancient church will look to you for guidance and for excitement to all good works. I know you too well to doubt that whatever can be done by human ministration of the word of God, you will do, in season, out of season, to the limit of your strength, for the winning of souls to Christ, and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in Hartford, in Connecticut, in all the breadth and length of our great Union, and through the world.

May God give you grace according to your need, and as your days so may your strength be!

THE CHURCH A HOME.

A Sermon

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST CHURCH IN HARTFORD.

BY

GEORGE LEON WALKER,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH,

ON

MARCH 2, 1879,

BEING THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING HIS INSTALLATION.

SERMON.

PSALM xxvii. 4.—One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

THE special point of significance in this passage is the aspiration it breathes for a continuity of habitation in God's house. The exiled psalmist looked, from his place of wandering, backward with almost inexpressible longing toward the temple and its worship. So intense and eager is his desire that the thought of merely visiting again, however frequently or freely, those once familiar courts does by no means content him. He wants to stay there. He remembers the Levites and the priests who have, among what his homesick-heart deems their privileges, the liberty of living on the sacred precincts. He wishes to live there also. He recollects that oftentimes in his people's history this franchise of a dwelling in the temple courts was granted to some fervent and godly soul, and he longs for it himself. He wishes to abide there not transiently but continuously: to find in it not a place of occasional visitation, but a home: "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

This fervent expression of desire on the part of the writer of this psalm—whoever he may have been—very naturally suggests the topic to which your atten-

tion will be invited to-day. This topic is : The Church considered as a Home.

It is not unusual on an occasion like this to present some topic of a more elaborate and ambitious character. The first service of a new pastorate is often made the opportunity for pointing out the relative duties of minister and people, or of declaring the plan of some evangelistic campaign, or of setting forth some doctrinal manifesto. More consonant with my own feelings is a much less demonstrative service. I invite you to the familiar contemplation of a simple and practical subject very closely related to our common welfare.

One of the fullest-freighted words in all human speech is "home." As it is uttered there rise to nearly every mind suggestions more tender and welcome than can be awakened by almost any other. It is one of those sweet, short, Saxon words, native to our blood, which hold volumes of meaning in a single syllable. Recollections of childhood's happy days; recollections of parents and their love and care; sweet memories of companionships and easy occupations of the by-gone time; of security and exemption from harrassing fears;—these come, to most of us certainly,—however lowly the place may have been, when we think of our childhood's home.

Or perhaps it is our present home of which we think. And the remembrance of such a place is a very refreshment to a toil driven man. There is such a man's retreat from the bustling and wearying world. There he goes, when, sick with life's perplexities and competitions, he would find quietude and content. He shuts the door and is at home. Here are wife and child and rest and affection. They are here—if they

are anywhere on earth! Sometimes, indeed, much or most of what makes a home is taken away from us, so that it seems only a wreck and ruin which is left behind. But even so, the most desolate of our homes holds more of good than all the world beside.

Or, perhaps, it is of a home to be made—having none now—that we think. Well, everybody thinks of it sometimes. For awhile, indeed, a man may toss on the waves of change, exhilarated by their very changeableness; and caring little for repose. A hotel and a railroad may satisfy him awhile. But the time comes when he wants rest. Nothing really to satisfy can be found in this drift and struggle of affairs. A center of affection, a hiding place from the turmoil of life, is a need which sooner or later all feel. There are few sadder sights than of homeless old age. Whether that homelessness is the result of bereavement of a possession once had, or of neglect or inability to make provision against a need which has at last arrived, there is little but melancholy (certainly in the earthly aspect of the case) of an infirm, uncompanioned, homeless old age.

Now analogous, in many ways, to the necessity and reality of a home for the social affections of men, is the need and possibility of a spiritual home. It is not man's body or man's heart only, which wants an abiding place; his soul wants it also. For it is not the body and heart of man alone which finds this world a place of disappointment and turmoil. The soul finds it even more. A disquiet more perplexing than any which tosses from change to change this outward life of ours, gives to the homeless spirit of man a still profounder unrest. The world around us cannot lend the needed repose. The pleasant homes

which we make for our social natures cannot minister to these deeper needs. Amid the most joyous circle of loving companions the spirit may be houseless and desolate. With everything to satisfy the yearning heart the soul may be like the dove sent forth upon the waters, without a place of a moment's rest.

Now it is this great inward want of man's spirit that religion provides for. God has not left any need of those natures which he has given us, unconsidered or without means of supply. The Gospel of Jesus Christ opens the door-way to a home for the soul. It introduces, whoever accepts it, to the companionships and the securities of a spiritual dwelling place. It makes the recipient of its blessings a "fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God." Such a man has a spiritual home. His body, indeed, may be unsheltered. His heart may be bereaved and lonely. But his soul has its place of refuge. He has come unto Mount Zion; to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven; and, recorded there, he finds a rest which no earthly abiding place ever gives.

But this home of the soul which, in the highest and truest sense is indeed invisible, has its outward embodiment. The same God who made the spiritual home above, appointed a representative of that home below. The home of the soul on high finds its needed likeness in the church of God on earth.

Under the Mosaic dispensation this counterpart and representation of the invisible home was the Jewish Temple. It was that which stood the symbol, and by standing the symbol became also, in a manner, the reality. Every devout Hebrew thought of the Temple as his soul's home. Three times a year, from the

farthest corners of the land, he journeyed to it. He carried thither his spiritual burdens. He went there for deliverance from his troubles. Fair and beautiful the Temple stood on its majestic hill, inviting all to enter with their miseries and their sins, and find expiation and rest. And reading them as utterances of a longing toward the soul's home, the language of many of the Psalms takes on an exceeding significance. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth. Let them lead me and bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles." "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." It was with an even passionate yearning—like that of an exile from his country, or a child from his parent's house—that the devout Hebrew turned toward that Temple which was to him, in a symbolic, and yet a most truthful sense, the dwelling-place of his soul.

Now what the temple was to the Israelite, that the visible church of God is to us. The companionship of believers in the gospel, associated in accordance with the commands of Christ, held together by the sacraments and ministrations of revealed truth, and worshiping in some accustomed place, constitute for us, in a subordinate, but nevertheless a substantial meaning, a spiritual home. Nor am I, in regard to a topic like this, very earnest that discriminations be made. I do not care to run dividing lines through the congregation, or to particularize precisely in what or in what not the analogy holds. It meets all the requirements of my present line of thought to say,

that any regularly organized Christian assembly—this one for example—with its familiar house of worship, its gathered congregation, its singers, its minister, its ordinances, its services of praise and prayer and explanation of divine truth, becomes to those who bear themselves rightly toward it, a spiritual home—a resting-place and habitation for the soul. As the earthly house one builds and wherein he shelters the dear ones of his family, becomes the home of his affections,—so the familiar Sabbath sanctuary comes to be cherished and loved as also a home: the home of interests deep and sacred as the spiritual nature.

That this is the case in actual reality, I am sure I have but to appeal to the experience of those who hear me. With what warmth and earnestness of emotion do very many to whom I now speak turn to the sanctuary in which they have been accustomed to worship—this one or some other as the case may be—“taking,” as the fervent phrase of the old psalm has it, “taking pleasure in its stones and favoring the dust thereof.” The spot is a home. The heart yearns toward it as to a place of rest. Wandering far away from it, tossed to and fro in the world, still it dwells in memory like the fireside of one’s youth.

Nor need the spot be in itself very attractive to win and fix this passionateness of regard. I fully believe in the propriety and desirableness of making the place of public worship pleasant with whatever beauty becomes the grave and noble uses of the house of God; but there is something deeper than any external attractiveness, in its power to charm the yearning soul. The houses of New England worship have been, prevalently, bare, unadorned, not to say even uncouth edifices. Perched often on some wind-swept hill-top;

destitute, frequently, of ornament or upholstery; sometimes bare of carpet and of paint, with rattling windows and creaking doors, they have been about the least winsome structures of all our raw American architecture.

And yet to how many such have New England hearts reverted when counting up the dearest possessions they have had on earth. It has been in utter truthfulness that such hearts in all our Puritan history have sung of such rude sanctuaries :

“ My soul, how lovely is the place
 To which thy God resorts :
 ’Tis heaven to see his smiling face,
 Though in his earthly courts.”

The devout and loving worshiper has felt no incongruity, even under leaky roof and frescoless ceiling, while he has chanted

“ How pleasant, how Divinely fair,
 O Lord of Hosts, thy dwellings are,
 With strong desire my spirit faints
 To meet the assembly of thy saints.”

Especially has this reversion of the heart to a cherished sanctuary been realized when a house of worship has stood long in the midst of a stable community; gathering year by year an increasing volume of sacred associations; becoming linked in with family history; connecting itself with generations past; and growing thus to be a part and parcel of the best and most sacred in the social as well as the religious life. How vividly does many a homely sanctuary recall to those who have long worshiped there, not merely the great facts of God's dealings with the soul, but the great facts of family history also! There sat the mother of one's youth. Recollection can bring back her sweet, placid

face; can even recall her garments, her attitude, her expression in praise and prayer. Up these aisles passed the father; memory can see him yet, going slowly and reverently to his accustomed place. Here was brought the child for baptism; the child was long since taken to a higher home; but with every new mother standing in this spot, presenting her little one, that child seems to come back again. From that pulpit, years ago, fell words, which to the gray old man sitting in the pew, sound louder than the words uttering to-day. Here God met and blessed men long ago as He meets and blesses us still. "Here I resolved. Here I repented. Here I determined to begin a better life. Here I registered my vow of service. Here first I broke the sacramental bread." And the gathered recollections of days gone by second and reinforce the impressions of the passing hour.

And, my hearers, I need not say that there is power and benefit in these commingled associations which make up the home feeling with which we regard the house of God. To develop and deepen this feeling is an object, on every ground, worthy of earnest care. Let me drop one or two passing hints in aid of this object; and especially in aid of such an effort for it as will make that home feeling which is developed, to be of the highest and best kind.

I. One very obvious suggestion toward the creating of a sense of home-likeness about the sanctuary, relates, of course, to regularity and continuity of worship.

The feeling of which we speak is a feeling of growth. It is the fruit of protracted and habituated relationship to the house of God. And so much are we creatures of association and of dependence on

external objects, that it is not a mere relationship to the house of God in general, which will develop the sense of home-likeness about the soul's worshiping place; but it is a relationship to some house of God in particular.

I know well that there are some, who, from various causes, withhold themselves from this particularity of connection with a single sanctuary. Some do so from a kind of affectation of liberality; worshiping by turns with one congregation or another, one denomination or another, as a fanciful notion of independence of sectarian limitation leads them. Others do so, from unwillingness to bear the burdens and take the responsibilities belonging to identification with any particular company of worshipers. Others still, are of the nomadic type from mere curiosity and fickleness of character; wandering hither and thither in search of the latest sensation. But the careful observation of results does not favor action on any of these principles. They are sources of spiritual weakness, even the most plausible of them. The persons who illustrate them are not those, certainly, to whom we turn for examples of power and fruitfulness in Christian life. That power and fruitfulness are the result of a more continuous, a more habituated, a more locally identified culture of the spiritual nature. The condition of best growth is fixity, not unrest. The apple-tree transplanted every summer must not be wondered at for barrenness. For any man, it matters not how cosmopolitan he may regard the scale on which he is made, the situation in which he can get and give most spiritual blessing is in association with some single body of Christian worshipers; in participation of their interests; in sharing their responsibilities and in holding their spiritual habitation as his religious home.

And there is no unreasonable restrictedness in a course like this. Every man is free to choose his spiritual home. And in every considerable community there is ample opportunity for choice. Tastes in this or that direction can be gratified. Needs felt in one or another way, can be supplied. A somewhat definite and dissimilar quality belongs to every different Christian organization. Here one element preponderates, there another. Here feeling is mainly cultivated, there principle. In one congregation music is a preëminent attraction, in another preaching. The traditions of one society are all in favor of warmth and activity; those of another are for slower and more deliberate endeavor. This one's worship is plain, cold, intellectual; that one's is fervent or even spectacular. And well it is, on the whole, that it is so. It affords opportunity for choice, and for the meeting of conscious want; not to say, also, for the mere gratification of individual fancy.

But when choice is made it ought to carry with it some substantial permanency. It ought to be sufficiently strong to build something on. It should take enough of the man with it to make him worth something to those he joins; and to give him, in return, a sense of relatedness to the complex and participated interest of an established Christian fellowship. This is a fact especially worthy of thoughtful remembrance by parents in reference to their children. The religious home is likely to be especially delightful if it is the household's religious home. Community of religious memories, participation of spiritual training, unity of ideas and feelings—these are great results to secure in family life, and childhood gains them as well as manhood, by fixity, continuity, identification. It is so,

only, that a home-like feeling can be developed. So only can that rich fruitage of sacred recollections and associations, which constitute so large a portion of the best influences which work upon us, be harvested by the soul.

II. Another hint toward making the church a home may be found in the cultivation of a sense of fraternity.

Our household homes are companionships of brethren and sisters, of parents and children. A feeling of community in interests, of quick-responding relationship to one another, is the very atmosphere in which they exist. To a very considerable extent such a feeling of relationship ought to characterize the associated members of every Christian congregation. A connection with such a congregation should in itself be a bond of recognized strength in joining its separate individuals and in bringing them into some practical degree, at least, of mutual understanding and acquaintance.

Of course I am not advocating a merging of all companionships into a religious companionship. I know we have, and always shall have, special tastes in society as well as in food or attire. But the results of organized religious companionship are, my hearers, however we regard them, very real results, and it would be wise in us to recognize them as such. There is such a thing as corporate church-character, as there is individual character. There grows up in a long-established society a peculiar quality of disposition which is at once the product of all its membership, and the source of influence upon them. What it is, they unitedly make it. But what it is, in its turn, affects them. It ramifies its results through all their house-

holds. The question whether good or ill is to come to any of their homes, is not a private question only. It will not receive its decision merely as the result of individual efforts alone. It will very largely be decided by the corporate character of that religious body to which they belong, and to whose character they contribute their mite of influence, and which in its turn reacts on them and theirs. We are related to each other, and we ought to feel that we are. The question of spiritual benefit to us and ours personally, is affected by the general quality of that religious organization with which we are associated, and we should recognize the fact. It ought to become a reason for acknowledging fraternity, for all the great results of fraternity do actually flow from it.

This persistency of corporate character in a religious organization is one of the most curious and one of the most solemn of facts. Side by side upon New Haven Green stand two churches of the same denomination. Their edifices are similar; their order of worship identical; their members to a considerable extent associate in all common ways of business and society. Those two churches, so similar, have thus stood neighbors for a hundred and twenty years. And yet there is to-day recognizable a distinct corporate difference; not as sharp indeed as it was when the one with great throes and struggles came out from the other; but a difference, nevertheless, which has survived more than four generations of men; and which makes the North church and the Center church as unlike as are sometimes, in a family group, parent and scarce-resembling child. You, too, in this church, to-day, are much what you have been made to be by the power of this near two-hundred-and-fifty-years-old

organization with which you are associated. You get what has been put into it by those gone before you. You, too, are putting into it what will live after you. You are bound together, and children yet unborn will feel the effect of that combination of influences to which each contributes his share.

Knowledge of one another; solicitude for one another; desire for each soul's welfare, is urged on you, therefore, not merely by benevolence but by self-interest. Bound to one another by influences which affect deeper than you know, your own and your household's weal, that bond of association should be recognized; should be made the reason in itself for united watch, for mutual service, for mutual love.

III. One further suggestion remains. It will contribute very much to the securing of that kind of home-like feeling which it is desirable to cultivate in regard to our sanctuary relationships, to keep very carefully in view for what objects and in reference to what interests the church is a home.

I have called the church a home. I have said that deep Christian experience in all times has found it so. But in what sense a home? Not primarily in reference to earthly and social interests. Those are provided for elsewhere. But a home for the soul. A place of spiritual refuge and communion. A spot continually, and above all else, suggestive of divine relationship, of eternal interests, of the privileges and accountability of the inward man. "One thing have I desired," says the Psalmist, "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." But why desire it? For what object seek thus a home in God's house? He answers plainly: "To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." The beauty of

the Lord! Not the beauty of architecture! Not the beauty of artistic music! Not the beauty of fine oratory! Not the beauty of handsome clothes! Not the beauty of graceful posturing, and scenic grouping, and skillfully arranged tableaux. "But the beauty of the Lord." To behold that, and to "enquire in His temple." That is to say, the dominant and all-moulding idea is that of adoration and worship. The place is sacred to God and to spiritual uses. The part of man's nature it is meant to provide for, is the spiritual part. The interests it should be held sacred to are not those of society but the soul.

In other words, the functions of our religious home are, and ought carefully to be held to be, religious. It is not the business of the church to furnish the amusements of society. Other agencies can do that quite as well, and at far less cost to higher interests. The power and value of those influences which come from the spiritual home will very much depend on the singleness with which this supreme interest is kept before the mind of all associated with it. The efficiency of those influences will very much depend on the purity of those influences. And in the long run I cannot but regard it as a mistake to think that men's inclinations need to be solicited by any such secular and extraneous method.

The Gospel of Christ has its own attractiveness. The sanctuary of God has its own legitimate and mighty strength to win and hold. Standing in the midst of this perplexed and suffering world; holding out invitations more tender than any other; ministering to the deepest of man's wants, and casting a beacon light out over the darkness of the future, it can never be destitute of its winsome and constraining

charm to sinful and weary men. And that charm will, in the long run, be prevailing just in proportion to the simplicity with which it presents God's house as a place where the "beauty of the Lord" is enquired for, and that alone. Religion, my friends, is not outdated yet. The gospel of God is not a worn-out tale. It does not need to be buttressed and supported by external helps. It has not yet come to the necessity of wiling man to its embrace by methods foreign to its own majestic aims. Nor, rightly presented, will it ever come.

My hearers, God has kindly given you the privilege of establishing somewhere a religious home. In this house or in some other house, with this band of worshipers or with some other band, you have the opportunity of abiding. Wherever it be, make the most of it! Think highly of the privilege; get all the good out of it you can; for among the possibilities of benefit you possess, this is one of the very chief. Wherever rises your spiritual temple, God bless it to you and you to it!

But speaking now, as is meet, especially to those to whom this house is the religious home, this congregation, mainly, its accustomed inmates, let me say: Cherish your Home and its dwellers! Prize the spiritual habitation which God has given you! Value aright the privileges and recollections of your own religious abode. You have, dear friends, taken the risk upon you, and that risk is not a light one, of inviting me to share this spiritual home with you. You have adopted, as it were, another member into your religious family; and a member, too, who by the virtues of the duties you lay upon him will be inevitably somewhat potential for the promotion or the hindrance

to the family welfare. Let me assure you the new member comes to you proud of the household name; glad to share with you the traditions of the family history: and hopeful to coöperate with you for the common good. Let us seek distinctly to keep that good in mind. Let us not be diverted from it into any lower purpose. God forbid that this pulpit ever become a place for personal display; for the display of anything but truth profitable to the soul. God forbid that these pews ever become the place of critical and fastidious repose; the place for mere enjoyment dissociated from service. Let us labor here together to grow strong unto every good work.

This church doubtless has its faults; many of them. This organization, through many of its departments, social, ministerial, spiritual, might be far better than it is. But nevertheless I make bold to say to you who are connected with it, that it is the best thing that you have. You could easier afford to have any other thing you possess, drop out of your lives and that of your household, than to have the hopes, the memories, and the influences of which this house stands the representative, drop out of them. In what it has been to others before you, in what it can be to you, bearing yourselves rightly toward it, this spiritual dwelling place is your choicest possession. Feel rightly toward it. Get the good it was designed to give. Hold yourselves loyally toward it, as to the mother who cherished your youth. Do for it what you can to perfect and strengthen it now, and to transmit with it a legacy of blessing to those who will find in it a Home after you are gone.

APPENDIX.

MEETING HOUSES OF THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY IN HARTFORD.

The following account of the early houses of worship of this society is taken, with some abridgement, from four articles on the subject written by Mr. Charles J. Hoadly, and published in the *Courant* in 1868-9.

There came into my hands some time since, with other old papers, four books of the accounts of a committee "for building a new meeting-house in the first or oldest society in Hartford," 1735-1741, and I have thought that there might be readers of *The Courant* who would be interested in some notices of the earlier houses of worship in that society.

A note in the dedication sermon preached by the Rev. Daniel Wadsworth, December 30, 1739, informs us that the first meeting-house was built in 1638. By this we are probably to understand, not that there was no regular place for public worship and other assemblages during the first five or six years of the settlement, but that the building used for these purposes was not designed for permanent occupation as a public building: for the general court, at a session April 5, 1638, orders that certain corslets, which "are in the meeting-house of Hartford," should be fitted for service, and, on the other hand, the Rev. John Higginson, our first school-master, in a statement recorded on Stratford town records, says that about the first of April, 1638, two Indians went up with him, Mr. Hopkins, and Mr. Goodwin, to Hartford, and not long after there was a committee in Mr. Hooker's barn, "the meeting-house then not buylded." At a town meeting in 1640, it was voted that the old meeting-house should be given to Mr. Hooker:—now it is not unlikely that this was the building in which the corslets above-mentioned were kept and to which Mr. Higginson also refers, and that it was used as a barn after the completion of the meeting-house begun in 1638.

Probably the building was not finished before 1641. We find on the town records, October 20, 1640, that the townsmen agreed with goodman Post to clapboard the meeting-house at 5*s.* 6*d.* the hundred.—January 11, 1640-41, it was reserved to the townsmen now succeeding to agree with goodman Pantry for the carrying on the work of the porch and appointing him workmen for that purpose, and appointing their pay, such as the country affords. March 13, 1640-41, it was ordered that the townsmen for the time being should have power to appoint seats in the meeting-house for religious services.

It was ordered, February 3, 1644-5, that a gallery be built in the meeting-house with convenient speed, at the town's charge; and again, February 11, 1660-61, the town voted that the townsmen in being should build a gallery of 20 pounds or 22 or 3 *l* price, at the town's charge, on the east side of the house. Whether these votes were carried into effect, we cannot determine, but February 17, 1664-5, there was another vote to build a gallery in the meeting-house, for the enlargement of the room, and that the townsmen in being should agree with workmen for doing the work to the best advantage for the conveniency of the work and the town's benefit, according to their best discretion; and in February, 1665-6, the town by their vote desired and empowered Captain John Talcott and Thomas Bunce to agree with William Clark for the building of the galleries, according as they shall see most suitable and convenient.

February 8, 1650-51, it was ordered that there should be a porch built at the meeting-house, with stairs up into the chamber, to be ordered by Mr. Goodwin and the townsmen.

The east side of the building required to be new shingled in 1660, and the south and west sides in 1667. The roof was ordered to be new covered with cedar shingles in 1687.* There were

* The following letter to Fitz John Winthrop, afterwards Governor of Connecticut, was kindly communicated by the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, of Boston:

HARTFORD, Janry 9th, 1687.

Honorable S^r:—May it pleas you to grant the favor that your Serv^{ts} may take leave to kiss your hand congratulating your happiness in all your terestiall and celestiall propertyes and injoyments, beging leave to tell you that o^r old church men have designed to keep up the church as long as may bee, and at present to endeavor a new cover of cedar shingles, and being enformed by friends that o^r cedar swamps will not afford us sutable stuff, being so wasted by fire and axmen, the care of the work and ordering this affaire being left with

new casements for the windows in 1699, and new ground sills, underpinning, and clapboards, and a new flooring of oak plank for the turret were required in 1704-6.

This meeting-house stood upon a little rising ground on the east side of the present state house square, then called meeting house yard. On this square was the market, the stocks, the pillory, and the whipping-post. The jail was on the north side, and it has been said that the earliest graveyard was close by. In this square the freemen of the colony were wont to assemble for the annual election of the governor and other public officers, and the general court from time to time held its sessions in the meeting-house.

The building was nearly square, with a hip roof, in the center of which was a turret where hung the bell, brought by the settlers, doubtless, from Newtown, now Cambridge, and placed in the turret when the edifice was first erected. There was a door on the north side, perhaps also other doors, and near by a horse-block for the accommodation of those who lived so far off that they must ride. The chamber over the porch, perhaps, served as the arsenal for town and colony, as a room in the south church did in later times. The windows were small, and the glass set in lead. Stairs from the interior led up to galleries on the south and east sides,—that on the south being appropriated to the boys and unmarried young men, and frequent mention may be found of the appointment of persons to keep them in order during the time of religious services. There may also have been a gallery on the north side.

or selves, and not knowing at whose door wee could more securly become beggers then at your Hon^{rs}, because none have gone away empty from your table, do now make it o^r businis to request that we may have liberty to make so many shingles in your cedar swamp (between Haddam and Saybrook) as may be sufficient to cover the sayd church or meeting house. We have agreed with M^r Jn^o Olcott about y^e work if we may have your consent of working there, being willing to be confined within the lenght of that tedder, and we dare warrant in case you shall comply with o^r request besides the benefit you have rec^d already, you shall never be debared from the free enterance and use of this publike house durning terme of life, besides the many and great obligations, with the (desired) addissional smile of your countenance upon us, will forever engage your friends in generall, and o^r selves in perticuller, who are allwayes

Honorable S^r, faithfully devoted

and your most humble Srv^{ts}

John Talcott,
Caleb Stanly,
Ciprian Nickcols.

Near the north door, and raised a little above the others, were the guard seats, and here too and in the alley sat the younger boys. One of the earliest orders on our town records appoints that there should be a guard to attend with their arms fixed and two charges of powder and shot at least, at every public meeting for religious use, with two sergeants to oversee the same and keep out one of them as sentinel every meeting; the said guard to be free from warding, and to have seats provided next the meeting-house door.

The pulpit was on the west side. It was furnished in 1703 with a plush cushion and a green cloth with a silk fringe and tassels.

The church possessed, in 1686, for communion plate, four pewter dishes marked

R. B. D.,

H. C.,

three flagons marked H. C., and also a table-cloth with the same mark as the dishes.* In 1700, Mrs. Mary Gilbert gave an additional pewter flagon.

The good people were "seated" according to their rank, men and women apart and on opposite sides. This practice of seating was kept up even till after the present church was built. There was, of course, a pew for the governor and magistrates in the most eligible position.

After having stood for 99 years, the old meeting-house was pulled down, August 3-6, 1737. The cost of its demolition was £14. It had long been inconvenient in point of size for the accommodation of the people, and it was probably in a very poor state of repair. More than ten years before it was taken down, a vote of the society had been passed to build a new one, but a difference of opinion as to its location occasioned a long controversy.

It was at first proposed, in 1726-7, to reunite the first and second societies and build one house for both. This was found impracticable, and the first society fixed, successively, on several locations on the east side of Main street. Mrs. Abigail Woodbridge, widow of the late pastor, offered one between the Athænum and St. John's Church. A considerable minority of the society was dissatisfied with any of the sites chosen and refused to proceed. At length it was agreed to build on the southeast

* Perhaps the R. B. D. stands for "Richard Butler dedit,"—Richard Butler was early a deacon. The H. C. of course stands for Hartford Church.

corner of the burying-lot, the town having granted permission to do so, and Capt. Nathaniel Hooker having generously given a strip of his house-lot adjoining on the south, the better to accommodate the new building. This location was established by the General Assembly in May, 1737.

It had been voted in 1734 to build with brick; and the dimensions settled upon for the house were seventy feet in length by forty-six in breadth; but the length was subsequently reduced to sixty-six feet, and it was decided to build of wood. A considerable quantity of brick had been procured, which was sold.

The long strife was now over, and the work of building was to be prosecuted in earnest. Mr. Cotton Palmer of Warwick, R. I., made a draft of the house, for which, with his advice, he received £1. The governor subscribed £20 toward the work beyond his proportion of rates. Dr. Jonathan Bull gave £5, and Mr. David Smith gave a barrel of cider for the raising. I have in my possession, as already mentioned, the accounts of the building committee, kept by Deacon John Edwards. He estimated that he took pen in hand five thousand times in the affair. These accounts supply many minute particulars, enabling us to trace the progress of the work, giving also the names of those who were engaged upon it, and the names of those who paid rates towards the building. Of these latter, Deacon Edwards reckons up one hundred and ninety-six, of whom he marks one hundred and twenty-four as dead by the beginning of October, 1767. The deacon himself died May, 1769, aged seventy-five.

The bell had been broken in 1725; it was recast in 1727, at the common charge of both societies. The first society, April 26, 1737, instructed their building-committee to endeavor to get the best directions they could about building a steeple, and what the cost thereof will likely amount to, and what timber is necessary for the building; they were also to treat with the committee of the new, or south society, about a convenient place to hang the bell, or what methods may be best to accommodate both societies in hanging said bell. July 4th, 1737, these proposals were made to the south society, "Upon the discourse the committee of this society have had with the committee of the 2d society in Hartford, viz.: Capt. Nath. Stanley, Esq., and the rest of the committee, we have considered, and, if we remember, the vote of both societies was that the bell should be hung in the old church, and there hang until the major part of both societies should agree to hang

it in another place, etc. And now our society are building a house to be set up in the burying-lot, and intend to join a steeple to said house to hang the bell in, and we suppose, as you are proprietors with us in said bell, the place being so accommodable for the bell to be hung for the benefit of the whole, that we may reasonably expect that your society will be a proportionable part with us, according to the lists of estate of each society, in building said steeple from the foundation until the bell be securely hung and covered from the weather; and we think it, therefore, proper also that your society should appoint a man or men that may join with our committee in the building of said steeple, so far as to see that said bell be safe and on a good foundation, and well hung and secured from the weather. But if your society think our proposals not reasonable, then, to prevent any jar, misunderstanding or controversies, (that may prove uncomfortable,) we are willing to leave it to three judicious, disinterested persons, of some other society, to hear and determine what part of charge each society shall be at in hanging said bell, that we may not go into, but leave off, contention before it be meddled with. But we hope you and your society will think our proposals so fair that they and we shall come into them without troubling any other." What precise arrangements were agreed upon between the two societies, we know not, for the records of the south society prior to 1767 are lost. However, July 14th, 1737, it was voted to build a steeple to hang the bell in, and there the bell remained so long as that house stood.

I suppose that there were no graves on the part of the burying-lot where the church was built. I find Maynard Day is credited two shillings for setting up a pair of gravestones of Mr. Edes, which were taken down for conveniency to lay the foundation of the meeting-house. Edes is not an old Connecticut name, and there are no stones bearing this name now in the yard. The site of his grave is probably covered by the present edifice.

On Monday, the 20th of June, 1737, they began to frame the new meeting-house. Mr. Eb. Sedgwick, Mr. Jonathan Butler, and ——— Phelps began at noon and worked to make mallets, commander (*i.e.* beetle), levers, etc. Sunday, the 31st of July, was the last day of public worship in the old edifice, as a portion of its materials were to be used in the new construction. The next day the society voted that the committee for building should take down the pulpit or desk of the old meeting-house, and place it with

suitable seats in the State House, for the convenience of the minister and this society meeting there for the worship of God. I might say that some of the timber of the first meeting-house is still in existence in the present Centre church building.

August 8th, work was commenced at the foundations of the new house, in which about twelve thousand brick were used, beside eighty-seven loads of stone. The foundation cost £99 5s. On the 8th of September, the sills were laid. They began to raise on the 13th, and ended on the 22d, and there is an account of £10 for liquor, etc., on that occasion. There are other accounts for rum and sugar for the men at the brick kilns, when they slaked the lime, when they raised the spire, etc.

For the raising it was necessary to send to Northampton for a rope, and the cost of the raising was £94, from which is to be deducted £17, "pin money." The following entry throws light on the question as to what the pin money was:—"To 5s. pd one Seymour for money he rec'd of Mr. Wells in change when he drove a pin at raising the meeting-house, which would not pass from sd Seymour, and it was $\frac{1}{2}$ a Boston ten that was pin money also, so ye society's money.

In October, 1737, Joseph Talcott, Jr., society's clerk, certified the General Assembly that the society had laid the foundation of a house on the southeast corner of the burying-ground, erected a frame with a steeple thereto, and got shingles and boards ready to cover the roof, and clapboards and other boards, and window stuff sawed, and much of it carted, ready to be laid on.

Little more was done in the fall of 1737, beyond covering the house. Mr. Cotton Palmer made a contract to make the spire, down to the floor under the bell, for £250. He began the work May 29, 1738, with three men besides himself, who by their names appear to have been also Rhode Islanders (Kennicott, Bucklin, and Wescot), and it was completed October 14, 1738. The steeple was adorned with a gilded brass cock and ball, for which Seth Young's bill was £52 13s. 6d.

May 28, 1738, the society voted that their building committee should make further inquiry who could and would do any part or completely finish the body of the meeting-house at the most reasonable lay and workmanlike. June 5th it was voted that Mr. Cotton Palmer be empowered to finish the work for £700, materials being found him, but this arrangement fell through, and the house remained unfinished until the next year, when the committee

agreed with Mr. Palmer to finish it all, saving the masons' work and the step-stones, for £800. The step-stones were not procured till the summer of 1740.

Mr. Palmer came the 9th or 10th of May, 1739. On the 17th of September, the masons began to lath. The lathing and plastering the body of the meeting-house, exclusive of the steeple, cost, at 1s. 6d. per yard, £64 17. On the 23d of December, 1739, the house was finished "saving a small matter to be done to the steeple." Five days previously a committee had been appointed to seat the people, with the advice of Gov. Talcott, and it was voted that there be no lecture preached in the house until we meet in it on the Sabbath. The Rev. Daniel Wadsworth, the pastor, preached the dedication sermon, December 30, 1739, on Haggai ii. 9: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former." The sermon was printed, and there is a copy in the library of the Historical Society.

This house stood with its side to Main street, and the steeple was on the north end. It was in length about the same as the width of the present Centre church, the building on the north, the upper part of which is now used as the conference room, and the rear of the building just south, occupied by Humphrey, Seyms & Co., both being older than the present edifice. There was a door on the south, and on the east, and one in the east side of the steeple on the north. The general appearance of the building and that of the one which preceded the present South Congregational church were alike, but the north was rather the better finished of the two.

The pulpit stood on the west side, and, of course, there was a sounding-board, or "canopy," to hang which sixty pounds of iron were used. The window back of the pulpit was shaded by a curtain of chene, to make which but $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards were needed, and its cost, with the trimming and rings to hang it, was but £2 3s. 7d. There were galleries on three sides; stairs to that on the north were built in the steeple, and to that on the south from the interior of the house.

On Sunday afternoon, June 14, 1767, just as divine service was concluded in the afternoon, a thunder-shower arose, and the steeple of the church was struck by lightning and badly shattered. One young woman was killed, and one or two other persons wounded; and, as the alarm among the people was very great, in the rush to get out of the house, several were more or less hurt.

Shortly after, when the steeple was repaired, it was voted to procure an electrical rod, which was among the first, and possibly the very first one in Hartford. Dr. Franklin had invented them about seventeen years before.

A town clock was procured, probably about the time that the steeple was rebuilt; but I have not succeeded in learning the precise year when, or where it was made; its remains are, or were lately, in the steeple of the present church.

There being no public hall in Hartford, except the chambers of the legislature or the ball-rooms at the taverns, the doors of the meeting-house were opened for assemblages of almost every kind. Courts were held here when the cases on trial were such as to attract a more numerous attendance of spectators than the small court-room could accommodate. The convention for considering the adoption of the constitution of the United States met in this meeting-house in January, 1788.

The building was taken down in December, 1805, to make room for the present Centre church. H.

The foundation of the present church was laid March 6, 1806. The entire cost of the building was reported by the auditing committee in January, 1811, as \$31,927.39. The consecration sermon was preached by the pastor, Rev. Dr. Strong, on Sunday, December 3, 1807, from the text—"Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever."

